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ABSTRACT

The recruitment and selection of teachers are addressed in this summary of 11 journal articles and documents which are available through ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center). The first entry examines the selection process of hiring new teachers, focusing on tools used in making selection decisions. The second abstract deals with the hypothesis that opinions of the supervisors of elementary education students are more accurate predictors of rapid employment than are cognitive tests. The third outlines a policy created to select new teachers incorporating an applicant questionnaire, teaching demonstration, and group interviews. The fourth abstract focuses on the involvement of teachers in the selection of teachers. Entry five emphasizes the use of credentials and the interview in the teacher selection process. Entry six summarizes processes and focuses on interrelated skills. The seventh entry examines the needs of rural school districts in recruitment. The eighth notes a study finding that informal, personal selection methods may be as effective as variable screening methods. Entry nine reviews studies on teacher selection and suggests radical changes to maintain educational quality in the future. The tenth entry examines a laboratory simulation of how applicants react to recruitment and selection procedures. The final entry presents a review of legal issues relating to teacher selection. Document and article ordering procedures are included. (WTH)

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The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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ERIC® Clearinghouse on Educational Management
College of Education, University of Oregon

This edition was prepared for members of the American Association of School Administrators

Recruiting and Selecting Teachers

1

Bredeson, Paul V. "The Teacher Screening and Selection Process: A Decision Making Model for School Administrators." *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 18,3 (Spring 1985), pp. 8-15. EJ 317 606.

Hiring teachers is one of the most important and complex decisions school administrators are called upon to make. By developing a conceptual model of the school personnel selection process, Bredeson provides school administrators with a valuable tool for improving their hiring decisions.

Bredeson's model is based on a synthesis of the decision theory, the "impression formation" theory, the inference theory, and the rating theory—all of which interact during the various stages of the selection process. That process involves such activities as "gross paper screening, fine paper screening, telephone reference checks, interviews, and examination of work samples." Raters assess each candidate according to their perceptions of the review data. This information is influenced again by the "overall bias component" of the raters' recall. Final impressions and inferences lead to the selection decision.

The common practice of rating candidates at various stages of the selection process, Bredeson states, can be a primary source of bias in decision-making, because bias can carry over from one stage to another. An example is the letter of recommendation. Because paper screening is one of the early stages of rating, letters of recommendation can influence an administrator's impressions of a candidate throughout the remainder of the selection process.

Bredeson suggests that administrators should "give various kinds of applicant information different weights or values." This type of formalization can help ensure that only factors "related to performance expectations and other job-related criteria" lead to the identification of the best candidate.

a more accurate predictor of future success may be the opinions of professional educators. Through a study of 111 elementary education students, the researchers sought to determine whether the students' NTE scores or the ratings of their supervisors would best predict who would obtain a teaching position within the first year after graduation.

The Elementary School Specialty Area Test (EES)—an NTE examination developed to measure cognitive ability—was selected as one predictor test. The Student Teacher Rating Form (STRF) was used to collect personal opinions from supervisors who interacted with the students for more than one year during their education.

An analysis of the data showed no significant correlation between the students' EES scores and their success in finding a job. Four of five questions on the STRF, however, showed positive correlations; high ratings seemed clearly linked to employment. The exception was a negative correlation for a question concerning "intellectual brightness," suggesting that statistically, at least, "being rated bright may be a hindrance in obtaining a job." These findings suggest that professional educators' opinions are more accurate than cognitive test scores in predicting employment.

Browne and Rankin note that the negative correlation concerning "intellectual brightness" on the STRF is consistent with the weakness of the NTE in predicting employment—both suggest that cognitive ability is currently a secondary consideration to those who select candidates. At a time when it is increasingly important to recruit those candidates who are most competent, serious questions must be raised, say the authors, when "personality factors may be more important than knowledge in determining whether or not the novice teacher receives a position."

3

Caliendo, Richard J. "Selecting Capable Teachers." *Spectrum*, 4, 1 (Winter 1986), pp. 22-26. EJ 334 192.

After deciding to limit the size of K-2 classes to twenty children in 1984, administrators in the Elmont Union Free School District discovered that eleven new teachers would have to be hired by the next year. To identify the best teachers, Superintendent Caliendo designed new selection policies that incorporated an applicant questionnaire, a teaching demonstration, and an interactive group interview.

Applicants first responded to a questionnaire that asked four essay questions involving class planning, teaching objectives, familiarity with educational literature, and special skills. Principals

2

Browne, Beverly A., and Rankin, Richard J. "Predicting Employment in Education: The Relative Efficiency of National Teacher Examinations Scores and Student Teacher Ratings." *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 46,1 (Spring 1986), pp. 191-97. EJ 332 471.

Numerous studies indicate that scores on the National Teacher Examinations (NTE) do not correlate well with actual teacher performance in the classroom. Browne and Rankin hypothesize that

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and district administrators scored the answers, and candidates who responded well were invited to teach a twenty-minute lesson to a second-grade or third-grade class. Six significant performance variables, including pupil responses, participation, and instructional objectives and techniques, were rated by administrators during the lesson. Teachers with above average scores "were considered candidates the district definitely would employ."

Immediately following the lesson, each candidate was interviewed by Caliendo and all six district principals. The interview was an opportunity for candidates to ask questions and explain decisions they had made during the performance evaluation. For administrators, the interview allowed a more complete assessment of candidates' personalities. A rating form was used to quantify the observations.

Elmont administrators hired fifteen new teachers between April and June 1984. A year after the selections, principals gave the new teachers exceptionally high ratings, and all will continue to be teachers for the district.

4

Gips, Crystal J., and Bredeson, Paul V. "The Selection of Teachers and Principals: A Model for Faculty Participation in Personnel Selection Decisions in Public Schools." Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 1984. 32 pages. ED 251 974.

How can the involvement of teachers improve the recruitment and selection of new teachers? To determine the current involvement of teachers in the selection process and the extent to which they would like to participate, Gips and Bredeson surveyed 183 public school teachers (K-12) in a large Midwestern state.

Many principals now advocate "increased participation of teachers in decision-making processes, including teacher selection," say Gips and Bredeson. According to their survey, however, teachers are minimally involved in the selection of new teachers and principals. Teachers in urban schools reported the least participation (2.8 percent), whereas rural teachers reported the greatest participation (26.9 percent). Teachers who reported higher levels of participation also indicated greater satisfaction with the process and its outcomes.

Of all the teachers surveyed, 76 percent expressed the desire to be actively involved in the selection of fellow teachers. They suggested that their unique insights into teaching could help them to evaluate candidates' teaching potential. Most importantly, the teachers claimed they could judge whether the candidates would fit in the system—that is, their "personal, instructional, and environmental compatibility."

While not wanting exclusive control over the selection system, teachers expressed the desire to observe and screen candidates, evaluate teaching experience, and make recommendations for hiring. Toward this end, Gips and Bredeson present a model for the meaningful involvement of teachers and administrators in the selection process.

5

Goldstein, William. *Recruiting Superior Teachers: The Interview Process.* Fastback 239. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1986. 26 pages. ED 269 365.

According to Goldstein, who gives concrete advice on teacher recruitment and selection, the two most critical procedures are the use of credentials and the interview.

Credentials can be either used or abused. College transcripts are the best indicators of a candidate's scholarship, and they should be scrutinized by school personnel. Application forms, when well-conceived, can also yield important information. Care

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The numbers below correspond with numbers of entries in the text and give ordering information for each item. Instructions for ordering materials from UMI and EDRS follow the list. If an item is available from the publisher, the address and price are given.

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must be taken, however, to avoid illegal questions concerning race, religion, marital status, or personal habits or handicaps. Letters of recommendation are declining in importance because most are filled with unsupported praise. The "judicious use of the telephone" may be needed to gain "fruitful and precise information" from references, says Goldstein.

Unfortunately, the importance of the interview is not always recognized by school administrators. A successful interview requires the full concentration of the interviewer and careful recognition of the candidate's emotions and feelings. If the interviewer uses a facade, so will the interviewee.

Interview questions should "elicit the explicit." When a question involves a set of real life complexities, the interviewer can judge a candidate's ability to analyze a situation, explain conditions, and then solve or salvage a possible course of action. Candidates should be able to respond with more than "lofty theory" when problems require pragmatic, concrete solutions. An outstanding teacher will display a mastery of content and presentation.

6

Jensen, Mary Cihak. *How to Recruit, Select, Induct, and Retain the Very Best Teachers.* Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1987. ED number not yet assigned.

Jensen's chapters on recruitment and selection summarize what is known about the processes and give examples of effective practices. "Each time a teacher is hired," Jensen states, "the local

school and its district have an opportunity to improve instructional programs."

Vigorous recruitment is becoming a necessity for inner-city and isolated rural schools. If recent predictions of teacher shortages are true, all schools may soon need recruitment programs. The task of recruiting, says Jensen, has been described as "a combination of search, salesmanship, and followup." To be successful, schools need to develop policies and budgets to recruit teachers throughout the year, and recruiters should represent qualities and characteristics of the district and community. By publicizing an interest in quality, the best candidates can be attracted and selected early.

Because teaching requires proficiency in a number of interrelated skills, it is imperative that hiring officials gather multiple information about candidates. These may include "direct work samples, critical-incidents tests, live demonstrations, and videotaped presentations."

Used correctly, the interview can also be a powerful tool. Reliability increases when interviews are structured and a candidate participates in a series of interviews with a selection team. Questions that can be answered yes or no, suggest answers, or indicate the interviewer's preferred response should be avoided.

A serious problem that all schools must avoid is "matching"—the tendency for selection personnel to select applicants similar to themselves or the school's current standards and quality. "The critical question in hiring," claims Jensen, "is not 'Who will fit in?' but 'Who will add to our skills?'"

7

Miller, James, Jr., and Sidebottom, Dennis. *Teachers: Finding and Keeping the Best in Small and Rural Districts.* AASA Small School Series #2. Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, March 1985. 35 pages. ED 254 377.

With the diminishing supply of teachers in many subject areas, rural school districts face a more critical problem than do their urban or suburban counterparts. To recruit and select high quality, motivated teachers, say Miller and Sidebottom, school officials should examine both the negative and positive aspects of teaching in rural districts.

The negative factors that dissuade many teachers from applying to rural districts include "social and cultural isolation, poor pay and salary differentials, limited mobility, and a lack of personal privacy." Unfortunately, this negative stereotype can eclipse the many positive aspects of the rural district. Small communities can be friendly and scenic, have easygoing lifestyles, and offer unique recreational opportunities. Their schools often have small classes, few discipline problems, greater flexibility in programming studies, and an overall higher quality of education.

Recruiters should openly advertise these benefits, state Miller and Sidebottom. Recruiting should take place year-round, involve "everyone in the school and community," and be based on the premise that "quality attracts quality."

A complete collection of ERIC materials on **Teacher Recruitment and Selection** is available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management in the Value Search series. This series features regularly updated, attractively bound collections of the ERIC database, purged of irrelevant citations.

The current Value Search on **Teacher Recruitment and Selection** contains 136 citations from January 1980 to present.

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In selecting a candidate, it is best to choose those with behaviors, interests, and skills compatible with the community. If weather or location necessitate long periods of isolation, "self-entertainers" and those who are self-sufficient are less likely to leave.

Miller and Sidebottom also provide checklists for developing interviews and pragmatic ideas for retaining the best teachers.

8

Nesbit, Lamar, Jr., and Tadlock, James. "Denouement of a Teacher Selection Process: Does It Predict Successful Classroom Performance?" Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1986. 23 pages. ED 268 118.

The school district in Jackson, Mississippi, implemented a state-of-the-art teacher selection system in 1978. All applicants are screened by mixed-media reduction-in-force procedures that yield a numerical performance variable. Because similar procedures are used each year to rate the performance of all teachers in the district, Nesbit and Tadlock decided to compare the annual evaluation scores of 326 teachers who were hired through the rigorous new selection procedures with 1,456 teachers in the general teacher population.

The study produced surprising results. No significant difference could be discerned between the scores for all teachers and teachers hired after the implementation of the screening process. This finding suggests that the informal, personal selection methods used by principals before the screening system may have been equally effective.

A moderate correlation between the screening scores and the annual evaluation scores was also expected, but none was found. The authors conclude that the complex screening criteria may "only serve to eliminate applicants with obvious technical deficiencies without the capacity to predict successful teaching."

The results of Nesbit and Tadlock's study were not considered a condemnation of the selection system. Its usefulness can be "fully justified on the bases of administrative convenience and standardization of employment procedures." The ability of the screening process to predict teaching performance, however, is now being reevaluated, as well as the accuracy of the annual teacher evaluation scores.

9

Schlechty, Phillip C., and Vance, Victor S. "Recruitment, Selection, and Retention: The Shape of the Teaching Force." *The Elementary School Journal*, 83,4 (March 1983), pp. 469-87. EJ 281 544.

The authors' review of recent studies on teacher recruitment, selection, and retention enable them to evaluate the past and present shape of the teaching force. Their conclusions suggest that radical changes may be needed if academic quality is to be improved or maintained in the future.

Between 1950 and 1970, the "postwar baby boom" spurred dramatic growth in the size of the teaching force. Many teachers were hired with only secondary educations and then were trained in the schools. In the 1960s, much was made of the limited education of teachers, and programs in colleges and universities were expanded to supply an increasing number of education degrees.

Today, it is believed that teacher quality is a matter of selecting the best "from an apparently overabundant pool of college-educated recruits." This view, claim Schlechty and Vance, is shortsighted and possibly damaging to the teaching force. The stated decline in the demand for teachers is shifting college students' interests away from the field of education and causing the most academically able to pursue other careers.

Schlechty and Vance's own studies found that certified teachers

are choosing to leave the profession at an increasing rate. They estimate that "40% to 50% of first-year teachers will not be teaching 7 years from now." Teachers who received high academic scores are twice as likely to change careers than are those with the lowest academic scores.

When all the factors are considered, a major shortage of qualified teachers appears to be imminent. Candidates in several subject areas are already scarce. Unless purposeful changes are made in the education of teachers, their career goals and rewards, and their status in the workplace of the school, Schlechty and Vance believe it is unlikely that the teaching force will attract those who can improve or retain its current quality.

10

Young, I. Phillip, and Heneman, Herbert G., III.
"Predictors of Interviewee Reactions to the Selection Interview." *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 19,2 (Winter 1986), pp. 29-36. EJ 330 718.

Since the completion of a legal teacher contract requires the approval of the applicant as well as the employer, decisions made by candidates during the process may equally affect the outcome. Young and Heneman conducted a laboratory simulation to "explore how individuals, as job seekers and applicants, react to organizational recruitment and selection procedures."

The participants in Young and Heneman's study were forty-four educational administrators and sixty-six classroom teachers who took part in a series of simulated group and single interviews.

The data indicated that teachers responded more positively when the interviewers demonstrated an awareness of the candidates' feelings and when they projected personal warmth toward the candidates. Interviewers were also preferred who "tended to work all the way through before reaching a conclusion." The chronological age of the interviewers did not significantly influence the teacher's reactions to the selection process.

Young and Heneman conclude that the implementation of awareness training or a careful selection of those who take part in the hiring process can enable a school to gain a "competitive edge" in the hiring of the best teachers.

11

Young, I. Phillip, and Ryerson, Dean. *Teacher Selection: Legal, Practical, and Theoretical Aspects.* UCEA Monograph Series. Tempe, AZ: University Council for Educational Administration, 1986. 32 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

This monograph presents a concise review of legal issues relating to teacher selection. In clear language, Young and Ryerson provide guidelines to formalize and refine selection procedures so as to reduce the chance of legal complications and select the most capable candidates.

Job applicants who previously have been restricted from moving into professional ranks because of stereotypes are now protected by federal and state laws. To exercise their rights, protected-class individuals must show only "prima facie" evidence of "disparate treatment" or "disparate impact" of selection procedures. Employers may refute the evidence by proving that all candidates receive fair consideration or that the individual filing the suit was rejected due to "a bona fide occupational qualification."

"Charges of discrimination," Young and Ryerson note, "have caused many school districts to over-react to the acts and amendments." In no way has the legislation necessitated the hiring of "unqualified" personnel or prohibited the selection of the most qualified candidate. "Employing candidates solely on the basis of protected class status" can weaken a district.

A key problem that leads to the selection of less than capable teachers and discrimination against specific groups is the use of "predictors" in the selection process that "may not have any practical value." Young and Ryerson suggest a means of determining the validity of individual predictors: Rate the actual teaching performance of a group of teachers in the district on the basis of the same predictors that were used to hire them. Then compare those ratings of actual performance with the ratings made during the hiring process. In cases where the actual and predicted ratings disagree, the predictors are invalid and should be removed from the selection system.

In this manner, all predictors used in the teacher selection process should be assessed periodically both for their utility and for their adverse impact on protected-class individuals, state Young and Ryerson.

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Besides processing documents and journal articles, the Clearinghouse prepares bibliographies, literature reviews, monographs, and

other interpretive research studies on topics in its educational area.

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